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16 March 1961

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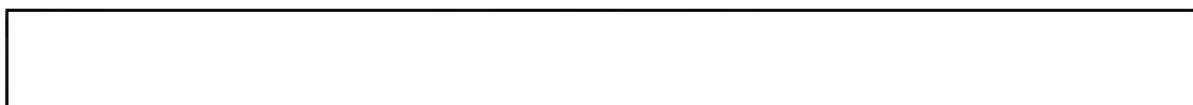


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Union of South Africa: South Africa's decision on 15 March not to seek admittance to the Commonwealth as a republic, and thus in effect to withdraw from that organization following severe condemnation of Pretoria's racial policies, will probably have little immediate effect on the Union's domestic affairs. The English-speaking minority--some forty percent of South Africa's whites--have been politically handcuffed in recent years and are not likely to provoke significant disorders. An eventual loss of the five-percent tariff preference would not affect more than about eight percent of South Africa's total trade. However, Pretoria's action is another major step in the Union's virtual withdrawal from the outside world. Its impact, moreover, may be greater in international African and Asian circles, where the concept of the Commonwealth as a multiracial club will be strengthened. Prime Minister Welensky of the Rhodesian

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[Federation may see in the London development a further indication that Britain will not modify its pro-African position in favor of Rhodesia's white settlers, who are talking about setting up an independent state.]

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WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

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[On the basis of findings by its Watch Committee the United States Intelligence Board concludes that:]

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- A. [No change from last week.]
- B. [No change from last week.]
- C. [Continued pressure by the Communist forces has led to a general deterioration in the Lao army's position in the Route 13 area. The Communists apparently intend to press]

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[their local advantage, and, unless the Lao army's will-to-fight improves significantly, the Communists may shortly be able to threaten Luang Prabang. The logistical build-up in the Plaine des Jarres continues at a high rate. With their generally improving military situation, the Communists are in a position to press for commensurately increased concessions in whatever discussions may deal with settlement of the Laos problem.]

- D. [The atmosphere generated by the Tananarive conference and Gizenga's continuing difficulty in obtaining military aid give hope that a political rather than a military solution may be in the making. The arrival of Indian UN contingents may touch off local incidents between the UN forces and Congolese army elements]

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